

# NEWSLETTER FROM CONRAD

REVIEW OF THE WEEK OF JULY 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2006

## MEET A BURNS STAFFER

NAME: *Sharlene Snoddy*  
POSITION: *Helena Field Representative*  
RESPONSIBILITIES: *Constituent casework and responding to letters*  
CAREER  
BACKGROUND: *Stay at home mom until last child entered college in 1999*  
HOMETOWN: *Helena*  
HIGH SCHOOL: *Mira Loma High School, Helena*  
COLLEGE: *American River College, Sacramento and Southern Utah University, Cedar City, UT*  
MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN MONTANA: *Deep Creek Canyon between Townsend and White Sulphur Springs*  
FIRST MET CONRAD: *In Helena during his first campaign, 1988*  
INTERESTING FACT: *Has five grandchildren!*

## Burns Chairs Hearing to Advance Air Transportation Technology *Working with FAA to Increase System Efficiency and Air Safety*

On Tuesday, July 25, Senator Burns chaired a Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Aviation hearing to examine the budget for an intergovernmental agency effort to oversee the future of the Next Generation Air Transportation System, advanced technology for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The FAA is working on upgrading their National Airspace System to meet increased air traffic, improve safety, and increase efficiency.

Since 2003, the FAA has been required by Congress to develop a comprehensive plan to accommodate dramatic growth in airline passenger travel, and welcome the introduction of unmanned aerial vehicles, very light jets, manned commercial space launches, hypersonic transport aircraft, and vertical takeoff and landing vehicles.

"I want to make sure the future of air travel in this country is safe and efficient for consumers," said Senator Burns.

## Burns Strongly Supports Child Custody Protection Act *Attends White House Signing Ceremony at President's Invitation*

On Tuesday, July 25 Senator Burns hailed today's passage of S. 403, the Child Custody Protection Act, by a vote of 65-34 in the Senate.

Senator Burns cosponsored this legislation, which would prohibit the transportation of a minor across state lines in order to obtain an abortion in violation the parental notification laws of the minor's home state.

The legislation would only apply in cases where crossing a state line to obtain an abortion violates applicable parental notification statutes. The punishment for any person in violation would be a maximum of one year in prison and a fine. There is an exception in the legislation if the abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother.

"When a state passes a parental consent law, those who would knowingly and intentionally violate that law by crossing a state law should be punished," said Senator Burns. "When it comes to the life of the unborn, people should not be able to go forum shopping with the sole intention of getting around their state's laws."

Typically, parental consent laws stipulate that in order for a minor to obtain an abortion, the minor must obtain the consent of, or notify, at least one parent, or go to court and obtain permission from a judge, a process known as judicial bypass. Montana has such a law, but it is currently not in effect due to a court order.

To date, 29 states have effective parental consent laws, according to the National Right to Life Committee.

On Thursday, July 27 Senator Burns attended the White House signing ceremony at the President's invitation. Senator Burns worked closely with Senators John Ensign (R – NV), Orrin Hatch (R – UT), and the entire Senate Commerce Committee to ensure passage of the legislation.

## **LISTENING TO MONTANA**

**How do you feel about  
the future of renewable  
fuels for Montana?**

\*Please send us  
your thoughts at:

[http://burns.senate.gov/  
renewablefuel/](http://burns.senate.gov/renewablefuel/)

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### **Call Conrad's office**

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(toll-free)

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### **Email Conrad:**

<http://burns.senate.gov>

## **Burns Secures another Victory for Rail Shippers**

*Customer Advocate Provision Included in SBA Reauthorization*

On Thursday, July 27 Senator Burns continued his fight for rail reform, expanding access for small businesses to the rate relief procedures and asking tough questions of the Administration's nominee for Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

The Senate Small Business Committee approved a provision today, championed by Senator Burns, to expand the role of the Small Business National Ombudsman, a senior executive in the Small Business Administration (SBA), as a part of the SBA reauthorization package. The new authorities will allow the Ombudsman to assist small shippers in bringing cases or complaints to the STB.

"We are continuing to deliver victories for shippers in our uphill battle with the railroads," said Senator Burns. "We want a healthy railroad, but it is clear that shippers across the country lack an adequate forum for dispute resolution for problems with rates and service. In Montana, we are dealing with a monopoly railroad, and shippers are feeling the effects of anti-competitive practices that seem to be growing. With this amendment, our shippers have another place to go to receive help in dealing with the STB."

According to the SBA, the National Ombudsman "receives complaints and comments from small business concerns and acts as a 'trouble shooter' between them and federal agencies. Small business comments are forwarded to federal agencies for a high level review and federal agencies are requested to consider the fairness of their action."

Thursday in a Senate Commerce Committee nomination hearing, Senator Burns directed pointed questions at Charles "Chip" Nottingham, the administration's nominee for STB Chairman. In the hearing, Senator Burns said, "Previous nominees have sat right in that same chair that you're sitting in right now and promised this Committee they'd get these small rate case procedures in place down at the Surface Transportation Board and it's yet to come. They've made those commitments about transparency and improved procedures and enhanced competition – a whole host of promises. You tell me why you're going to be any different than the ones that preceded you."

Prior to Nottingham's confirmation hearing, Senator Burns requested that the nominee to meet with a variety of national and Montana shippers, to understand the seriousness of captive shipper issues. Those meetings gave Montana groups the opportunity to share their concerns about the state of the rail industry today. Burns has also met with Nottingham to personally share his views that the STB should focus more on enhancing competition in the industry.

Last week, Senator Burns successfully included an amendment to the fiscal year 2007 Transportation Appropriations bill that places significant pressure on the STB to curb anti-competitive practices in the railroad industry and expand access for small shippers. Senator Burns is the leader of S. 919, the Rail Competition Act, which will restrict the ability of the Class I railroads to limit competition through anti-competitive practices and reform the Surface Transportation Board to make it a viable forum for dispute resolution.

On June 21, the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on the legislation. In addition, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources has conducted hearings into rail delivery problems, as has the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The provisions included in the Transportation Bill by Senator Burns are based on S. 919.